The
COMMONWEAL

VOLUME XXXIX *April 7, 1944* NUMBER 25

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THE COMMONWEAL *is indexed in the Reader's Guide, Catholic Periodical Index and Catholic Bookman.*

Published at 386 Fourth Avenue, New York, N. Y.—AS. 4-9685
Annual Subscription: U. S., $5.00; Canada and Foreign, $6.00

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Foreign Policy

SECRETARY HULL'S 17-point statement of American foreign policy says a lot of very obvious things and includes many generalities with which one is forced to agree. And of course his statement is vague; such summary treatments of vastly complex matters are bound to be vague because they are bound to be abstract. Unfortunately the vagueness of Secretary Hull exceeds what was necessary in so general a document. Probably the reason for this is that he could not enunciate rigorous principles against which we have obviously acted in the recent past and against which, at the present rate, we will probably have to act in the future. Indeed as time goes on, we more and more become aware that our foreign policy has not been and is not based upon any principle but is improvised to fit events. This is not the case with Russia. Clearly Soviet diplomacy now runs almost totally in the grooves established under the Czars. This is not the case with Great Britain. There are no real signs that England is departing from her traditional balance of power policy, although occasionally prominent Englishmen indicate that they feel such a departure would be highly desirable. The result is that we find ourselves playing a very minor third fiddle in the Allied concert.

There is no use pretending that this is not true. A year or two ago it was possible honestly to expect that the United States was cast for a great rôle in shaping the future. Then, because of our love for improvisation and our unwillingness or inability to formulate a consistent basic foreign policy, we proceeded as rapidly as possible to make ourselves unavailable for the rôle which was well within our reach. What looked like a very clever and intelligent handling of matters in France, and with the French outside France, now is made to appear a sheer accident, motivated by nothing more serious than personal dislike for de Gaulle. Almost two years ago, when we were really in a good bargaining position with Russia, we refused to discuss the question of Russia's postwar frontiers, and now we find that this matter is likely to be decided by the Russians, unilaterally, with ourselves certainly out in the cold and with Great Britain in only slightly better position. Recent reports from Europe indicate that we have lost all prestige and moral authority in those areas where our Army is in occupation, and there is some reason to believe that we are not any too highly regarded in any part of the occupied countries. And as to what we have really accomplished in Spain . . .

Perhaps all this has been inevitable from the beginning, though it seems incredible. Probably the truth of the matter is that our motives have been so conflicting that they were bound to end in a contradiction. We realized that we must defend ourselves against the aggression of Germany, Italy, Japan; that the only kind of world in which we wanted to live was one in which this aggression enjoyed none of its fruits. At the same time we wanted no basic, no root changes, anywhere. The two motives are basically self-contradictory; so long as we harbor both, our policy can be nothing more than what it has been.

Attack on the TVA

THE PASSAGE of the $8,000,000,000 Independent Offices Appropriations Bill by the Senate was the occasion of fireworks that guttered out after an unfortunate trajectory. Acting Chairman of the Appropriations Committee McKellar of Tennessee succeeded in attaching two riders to the bill: one would require Senate confirmation of all executives in government agencies enjoying salaries of more than $4,500 a year, the other would require the TVA to turn in to the government all receipts from the sales of its power, phosphates etc., give up its revolving fund and go to Congress for all appropriations for its operations. All this seemed aimed directly at Senator McKellar's old political enemy, TVA Chairman David E. Lilienthal. Vice President Wallace, who was presiding, made the mistake of dubbing this attempt to attach amendments to other legislation

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to an appropriations bill as a "political trick." A number of the Senators present considered this phrase an affront; the amendments were adopted. And so a personal political feud and an exaggerated sense of Senatorial dignity may lead to the partial undoing of a decade of constructive work.

For one thing, the TVA has prided itself on its record of keeping out of politics. And in a day when more and more authority is being vested in the hands of the government in Washington, the Tennessee Valley Authority has followed a strong and consistent policy of decentralization. Both of these achievements are directly threatened by the current Senate action.

No question of insufficient responsibility is involved. Under the original TVA act, and subsequent practice, the agency's finances are carefully audited by the Comptroller General and a leading commercial accounting firm as well. The TVA also makes a detailed annual report to Congress and has to report at regular intervals to the Senate and House Appropriations Committees — and, through the Bureau of the Budget, to the President himself. Moreover, under its present decentralized set-up (which involves strong local authority) the TVA is responsible directly to the million and a third people in seven states who are reached by that vast water control system.

There is no evidence that the TVA is poorly administered either. On the contrary what it has accomplished in the fields of cheap hydro-electric power, improved navigation, flood control, soil building, reforestation and human rehabilitation is one of the few encouraging large-scale achievements of the past ten years. According to present prospects two-thirds of the original cost of seven hundred millions will be paid back back out of the revenues from hydro-electric power alone. And in the meantime traffic on the improved Tennessee River has tripled. The great floods which periodically caused widespread human suffering and property damage have ceased altogether and cannot recur. There are many other TVA achievements. It should be a source of pride to every American.

This is not the first time that the TVA has served as a political football. But its independence from politics has never been in greater jeopardy. Seldom has it been more important for the House to "hold that line."

Puzzling Phenomena

THE MIND of what might be called the "professional" American liberal has reached a stage very nearly psychotic. The terrible necessity of having to classify everything under the terms "fascist" and "democratic" constitutes an appalling burden. And the duty of ferreting out every sin against holy democracy leads to strange results. Thus within a week we find *PM* gravely informing us that Northern Ireland is a noble democracy, whereas the Twenty-six Counties are fairly crawling with fascism. And the aspiration of the South to a United Ireland seemingly has no importance except to serve as a springboard for nazi propaganda. What a simple world we do live in! But the neatest trick of all has been the national publicity given by the New York *Post* and *PM* to Father Coughlin's recent *obiter dictum*: "It matters not what military force wins this war." This apodictic utterance might well have languished in the relative obscurity of a sermon preached to a congregation of at most 1,000 persons had not our embattled liberals picked it up and disseminated it throughout the entire nation. Father Coughlin's riposte, if we are to believe *PM*, consisted in coming out strong for Stalin in his following Wednesday sermon. He is quoted as having said: "In three years Stalin has changed much of communism. He is extremely different from the old Stalin. Following the peace, through the efforts of Stalin, all antipathy to religion in Russia will be suppressed. The Anglican Church of England and the Lutheran Church of Germany and the Catholic Church will have access to Russia and will be free to practice religion there. Totalitarianism existing in Russian labor will vanish because Stalin realizes the virtues of individual initiative." A little later Father Coughlin is said to have remarked: "God bless Halsey and Nimitz, who are chiseling their way through the Pacific to free China." *PM* remarks that his congregation did not know what to make of it. Nor did *PM*—nor do we.

Rules for Open Cities

THE GERMAN RADIO speaks of a German proposal to make Rome an open city. We don't know what the German proposal is worth or whether it is a serious proposal. But we know that we want to know, and that a great many people want to know. We can only know if the governments of the United Nations find out. They can find out what it is worth. We cannot. If they don't find out what it is worth, the day will come when the peoples of all the civilized world will ask them why they did not.

If Rome is destroyed because the governments did not take the trouble to find out if it could be saved by making it an open city, posterity will curse the frivolous blindness of the governments.

THE COMMONWEAL, time after time, has asked that clear rules be publicly defined under which *not Rome alone, but all other cities vital to the life of civilization,* can be recognized as open cities and spared. These rules should have been made long ago and made known to the enemy. No matter what the German proposal may be, we must make our own rules, our own proposal now—at the last minute—before it is too late.

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Banal Operetta

SOMETIMES in a work of art something that really is no more than a trick has tremendous and lasting effectiveness. It is as if a man read all the rules in the textbooks about dramatic irony and then said this is where I will put some of it in and according to every probability it should not work and then, suddenly, it does work just as the textbooks said it would. It works perfectly. In "Pelléas," Debussy used no tricks in his music. The music has a dignity which is above all tricks. But in Maeterlinck's text there are tricks all over the place and the one which worked so well that no one can ever forget it who has heard the opera is the trick of understatement. Mélisande surrounded by every possible horror and fear, forced to sing on the stage with a man whose name Golaud in itself would seem to bear a premonition of disaster, remarks simply and with quiet perceptiveness, I am not happy. In "Louise" both music and libretto are worked out laboriously according to the sort of plan one might expect to learn in a correspondence course, yet here, too, one of the tricks that should not work works magnificently. Louise has been having a very hard time with her father, who has been giving her a severe and consciously proletarian lecture on the values—Pétain anticipated—of Family and Labor. Finally things quiet down and, just before the curtain falls on the act, Louise starts reading the paper aloud to her hard-working mother and father. She sits there in a room high up in a Paris tenement with her dreams and her love impeded and through the French window you see the roofs and the domes of Paris with the light changing very rapidly because of the electricians and she opens the newspaper and the first words she reads are from, of course, the society column: "A Paris la saison s'annonce brillante . . ." The curtain falls.

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I am not happy in this season of spring with whatever it announces. This year the people who are running this world have managed all the tricks of dramatic contrast only too well. In New York at dawn the tall buildings catch the light and it is that way in the mountains with the valley still in shadow and in Rome all the buildings are fresh and bright in the dawn; the bells in the churches ring all over the city; and the first birds call; from one basin to another the water in the fountains overflows with the stone angels still gesticulating after the night, the stone dolphins playing in the water and the bright spray endlessly renewed. The dawn comes also over Anzio.

It is entirely purposeless to pursue any further this matter of the dawn this year, this matter of the spring. I do not know why, but I seem unable to escape from opera. In "Pagliacci" whatever his name is, the clown, Caruso, is worried also about dramatic irony, so worried that the audience may miss its obvious exemplification in his person that he sings—and sometimes bellows—the most famous aria in the opera to explain the situation. The audience of course knows that while he laughs he suffers, but he insists on explaining that the Sicilian peasants in costume on the stage know nothing about his personal affairs and that they rightly expect him to be as entertaining as usual. But look, he says, that is the whole point about the actor's life; he has his personal life and he has a rôle to play; the play must go on. One would suppose that such a simple confidence would be most tedious, yet it is tedious only to those who have heard it too often. Caruso's plight in itself remains of permanent human interest. It is hard, sometimes exceedingly hard, to dismiss sorrow on the grounds that it is too obvious a sorrow.

Of course, for this question of spring and of war there might be subtler ways of seeing it. Perhaps the great poets might help if their words came to mind, but they do not come to mind. Or when they do, they drift off at once into the easy, obvious contrasts of the more popular operas. "Oh to be in England, now . . ." that the British, the Canadians, the Americans are there waiting in this springtime of decision.

There is another method used in opera, that of the theme which first occurs in moments of happiness—the "chè gelida manina" of "Bohème"—and then reappears in the last act in a minor key when Mimi with her love recaptured is filled with the memory of things past and now forever to be abandoned. The same little air is repeated then, and a great many people—simple people if you like—for many years, in the Scala, in the San Carlo, in the Metropolitan, in London, in Copenhagen, in Oslo, in Berlin, in Vienna, in Munich, in Paris, in the small provincial towns where opera comes once in a season, have thought that this repetition was effective, for a few moments quite heartbreakingly effective.

What can one do with this repetition of the theme of spring? Say it does not matter? Close one's ears? Destroy the calendar of the seasons? Disdain this aping of art by the revolving earth? It would be a nice bit of work if you could get it, a nice job of work. If you could forget that it is springtime in a time of war.

I cannot forget the spring because I know what the spring is like in the Hudson hills, and the spring is here in the city for anyone to see. I know what the spring is like in the Italian hills, and here in the city it is no longer dark when you go home from work. And there is no one who can forget the war. So what can one do but in misery accept the banal?

C. G. PAULDING.

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Spain's Lost Chances

Attempts at reconciliation during the Civil War

Alfredo Mendizábal

IN A recent article devoted to the late Professor Besteiro (THE COMMONWEAL, February 18) mention was made of the untiring but fruitless efforts of that heroic citizen to secure a conciliatory solution of the fratricidal struggle which from 1936 on split the Spanish people in two and fired the two factions against each other. The symbolic meaning of the career of this socialist leader, doomed to disappointment, ought to be placed in its proper setting by pointing to other efforts of the same sort which, although they did not succeed in realizing their objective during the Civil War, nonetheless have great value as an example and as a ferment and stimulus for future solutions. That the imposition by force of the Franco régime was no solution is proclaimed by the million and a half dead, the unrest, the misery and the ruin of Spain, the hundreds of thousands of prisoners and exiles, and the insecurity, both national and international, of a government which only by means of the harshest police measures can succeed—and then very precariously—in maintaining itself. We must not forget that at the end of the war the *dossiers* of suspects listed by the Falangist dictatorship (which had learned how from the Gestapo) reached the enormous total of 2,000,000 names.

From the very first hours of the struggle the former President of the Republic, Alcala Zamora, whose efforts during his incumbency had been precisely to prevent the outbreak which came about as soon as he left office, believed it was his duty to proclaim the necessity of reconciliation between Spaniards. Accordingly he strove unceasingly to convince and enlighten international public opinion. Other political figures, such as the ex-ministers of the Republic, Miguel Maura and Salvador de Madariaga, also labored unremittingly along similar lines. But only men who were independent in spirit and resided physically outside the ambit of the aroused passions of both Spanish zones were able to express the anguish of millions of their compatriots, prevented as they were from making known their deepest personal convictions.

Many of the refugees were not fitted for peaceful tasks since they had come to be possessed by a spirit of bitterness by dint of the struggle and the sufferings they had endured. But among those who had left of their own free will because in conscience they could not countenance the criminal procedure so prevalent everywhere, there were from the first a number of liberal souls whom the agony of Spain guided toward solutions quite contrary to those which violence was dictating to the enraged masses. Those sentiments found expression in concrete terms early in 1937 in the Spanish Committee for Civil Peace founded in Paris by a group of patriots (whose patriotism was misunderstood by the partisans of either side). They were desirous of studying, disseminating and acting upon constructive solutions of the problem so disastrously posed by the fomenters of the counter-revolutionary insurrection and accepted by the soldiers of the revolutionary war.

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Since I worked actively at the head of this group (which won me a sentence of fifteen years banishment at the hands of a Franco tribunal for political responsibilities, plus other reprisals and penalties, beginning with the loss of my position as university professor, dismissed at one and the same time by a Franco general and a communist minister), I knew at firsthand what was done up to 1939 to attain conciliation in Spain through an international mediation which would have begun by expelling from the country the foreign troops who had intervened. This was a difficult task, at times almost utopian in character. Yet it corresponded to an ideal of resolving internal differences between compatriots who, if not able to reach agreement upon their respective positive aims, could at least have agreed on certain aims of a negative character. For each side was opposed to the dictatorship of the other. Simultaneous acceptance of anti-fascism by one side and anti-communism by the other would have established an area of agreement that would have made possible the reestablishment of a régime of freedom.

The quest of free Spaniards for "civil peace" soon found echo and support from a number of Europe's leading political, diplomatic and intellectual figures. In order to endorse such action and bring it before the various governments, Committees for Peace in Spain were set up. In France under the presidency of the great philosopher, Jacques Maritain, and with the cooperation of

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eminent men of various walks of life, such as Monsignor Beaupin, Bourdet, Champetier de Ribes, Madaule, G. Marcel, Mauriac, Mounier, Scelle and Vignaux, among others. In England the president was Mr. Wickham Steed, former editor of the *Times*, and his associates included Lord Cecil, Professors Gilbert Murray, E. J. Entwistle and R. Bevan, members of Parliament such as Corbet Ashby, Roden Buxton and H. Nicolson, and such writers as F. Borkenau, Barbara Barclay Carter, Crawford, and Don Sturzo (whose tireless efforts to further this generous cause were manifest at all times). In Switzerland Professor Séchéhaye formed a similar group. A Committee of Action for Peace in Spain had come into existence under different inspiration in Paris and worked constantly in harmony with the others under the direction of L. Le Foyer; the Committee France-Espagne headed by M. Bouvier also supported the solution of mediation. Cardinal Verdier and Cardinal Liénart, the Quaker organizations and other groups giving relief to civilian war victims enthusiastically backed up these efforts, which at one time also won the support of the French veterans' associations.

In April, 1938, the Spanish Committee for Civil Peace assembled in Paris a conference of Spanish, French and English personalities presided over by Maritain, Steed, Madariaga and the present writer. This conference studied, prepared and offered to the British and French governments a complete plan for an armistice and for mediation that was to be communicated and recommended to the belligerents.

The plan drawn up by these committees included (1) provisions for an armistice during which the authorities in each zone would continue to exercise power in their respective territories, would agree to the withdrawal of all foreign troops, proceed to the liberation of prisoners of war, grant amnesty for political crimes and respect the essential rights of the human person and reach an agreement on travel and commerce between the two zones; (2) conditions of an international character: a commission of mediation, police force, loans for reconstruction and guarantees of national sovereignty and neutrality; (3) the foundations for the organization of peace, with a governmental commission of three members, one from each side in the conflict and a third member chosen by the other two; a commission which upon the termination of the armistice would transfer its powers to a provisional government which would be recognized by the nations as the only Spanish government and would promulgate a provisional constitution which would not be inspired by totalitarian principles of any kind, would assure liberty and the political equality of all citizens, freedom of worship and teaching, regional liberties and freedom of the press, finally a constitution which would be a step toward a definitive régime set up by the Spanish people through free constituent elections. The object was, therefore, to leave to the Spanish people themselves the responsibility for remodeling their institutions and correcting the errors of the past in a new atmosphere of civil concord. And the mediating powers would have to confine themselves to proposing, assisting and guaranteeing this peaceful agreement, although without their diplomatic intervention neither of the belligerents (or better those who without consulting them took it upon themselves to represent the combatants and force them into the war) would have taken the first step toward the reconciliation which the exhaustion of the country required.

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In order to keep the people fighting at fever pitch, the authorities on both sides succeeded at every juncture in stifling at its inception whatever demonstrations or even comments were favorable to mediation. And the fearful police apparatus, which under the name of "Servicio de Investigación Militar" functioned under Falangist control in Franco territory and under the Communist Party on the Republican side, with the cruelty characteristic of the Gestapo and the GPU, acted faithfully according to their German and Russian models. The other countries, watching the Spanish struggle from afar, became accustomed to regard as if it were a fact the idea that all Spaniards were either "Reds" or "Whites." In fact, the majority of the Spaniards were at odds with whoever ruled them and whoever bombarded them; and the terror wreaked upon the non-conformists led millions of men in each zone to wish for the triumph of "the others."

There was no lack of generous initiative officially manifested by countries distant geographically but close in their feelings of cultural solidarity. In August, 1936, the Uruguayan government and in October, 1937, the Cuban government appealed to Washington for United States support of a joint mediation by all the Americas to propose terms for an armistice and lead to the desired peace. But in both cases the government in Washington declined the invitation, announcing on its part the decision "scrupulously to refrain from any interference whatsoever in the unfortunate Spanish situation." In 1938 the eighth Pan American Conference, meeting in Lima, considered a proposition of mediation emanating from Cuba, Haiti and Mexico, seeking the establishment of a commission made up of direct representatives of all the republics participating in the conference and designed to undertake the steps leading to a resolution of the conflict. This proposal was received without enthusiasm by the other members of the conference, and raised

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against it was a proposal by Argentina that the conference limit itself to expressing a desire for a speedy termination of the Spanish tragedy and to declaring that the American nations were ready to intervene if the two opponents in the struggle should invite them. Which was precisely the development for which there was no hope whatever.

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Those who were willing to mediate lacked the necessary power to prevail and those who possessed that power lacked sufficient will to impose mediation. Nevertheless there were several occasians when a certain state of stalemate between the belligerents would have made feasible a solution that would have begun by the withdrawal of foreign aid. At one time Germany appeared quite disposed to lose interest in the fate of Franco—early in May, 1937, when six months of fruitless efforts by Franco's troops to take Madrid led the nazi government to believe that it would require too much aid on Germany's part to enable its protegé to win out. Doubtful of such a victory, the nazis (who had recently sent a Krupp representative to a legation of the Spanish Republic in one of the smaller countries of Europe to offer "the necessary material for winning the war") indicated that they were favorable to considering suggestions from London about withdrawing from Spain. A plan to effect this, dealing particularly with aviation, was in process of study when the bombing of the cruiser *Deutschland* by a Republican plane gave a pretext for the savage reprisal against Almería by the German navy and Hitler decided to apply decisive force in Spain. Another favorable moment for getting Franco to accept mediation was in January, 1938, when the Caudillo lost his first important battle, the taking of Teruel by the Republican army. But at that time the Popular Front government was not disposed to any negotiation, laboring under the naïve illusion that this first victory would be followed by many others.

The repeated if indecisive gestures of France and England did not prove efficacious. There remained a vague hope in the League of Nations, which since 1936 had taken a position favoring peace in Spain. Calling together an extraordinary session of the Council of the League in December, 1936, precisely to take up the Spanish problem, England and France proposed to the German, Italian, Portuguese and Russian governments that they join with them out of humane sentiments "in order to stop the armed struggle in Spain through an offer of mediation seeking to obtain from the whole country a means of expressing the national will." None of these four governments dared to oppose this openly and the Soviets even gave their explicit adhesion in principle. In the December 11 session of the Council Lord Cranborne and M. Vienot explained the intentions of the French and English governments in seeking the cooperation of other nations in order to "come to an agreement with the two factions so that an armistice might be negotiated," and Lord Cranborne added: "A responsibility which in reality devolved upon all of Europe." The resolution, however, which was voted by the Council limited itself to "viewing with sympathy any action which would be undertaken on an international plane" by the French and English governments.

In September, 1937, Mr. Koht, Norwegian Foreign Minister, proposed before the League Assembly at its eighteenth regular meeting the duties incumbent upon it: "I have suggested," he said, "a positive action in favor of peace. For I am not satisfied with the negative action simply of having the foreign troops leave Spain . . ." He proposed that "the Council be charged to approach the rival factions in order to obtain a suspension of hostilities, with the understanding that during this armistice the means of a peaceful solution would be sought with the aid of the League." The delegates of Ireland, Argentina, Uruguay and Colombia adhered to this proposal, but the Assembly displayed the same timidity as the Council. Its resolution adopted by 32 member states, including the Spanish Republic, went no further than "to beg the Council, in view of the provisions of Article XI of the League Covenant, to follow attentively the development of the situation in Spain and to take advantage of every opportunity to seek a basis for a peaceful solution of the conflict." Thus at one and the same time the principle which required action was recognized and that action was invoked as if it were not of immediate urgency for Spain and all of Europe. Before the Council of the League Lord Halifax declared at the May 11, 1938, session, that with regard to Spain "the League is particularly competent to act as an instrument of conciliation." But people generally turned a deaf ear to the appeals of the men of peace and continued "to act as if they were spectators at a bull fight and to spur on the combatants," to quote Professor Th. Ruyssen, one of the champions of "peace through justice."

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And the war kept on in its all-out fashion. The official steps taken by France, England and the Vatican to bring at least an end to the aerial bombardment of civilians were fruitless. Franco and Negrín were alike in declaring that anyone who spoke of mediation or compromise was a traitor and an enemy of his country. The will to peace and conciliation of the Spanish people remained stifled by the party leaders, who imposed a war of extermination. When in December, 1938, the Spanish Committee for Civil Peace proposed a Christmas truce that would have given both com-

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batants an opportunity to ponder the futility of continuing the struggle, many leaders of good will were united in supporting such a project. Former Ambassador Madariaga, honorary president of the Committee, broadcast a moving appeal to all Spaniards, the independent French press and the French Confederation of War Veterans sought the support of the French government, the Catholic Church agreed to mediate and a French bishop, Monsignor Mathieu, went to Rome on this peace mission after an interview with the French Foreign Minister. He was received at once by Pope Pius XI, who gave the necessary instructions to Cardinal Pacelli to ask General Franco in his name for the Christmas truce. But scarcely had twenty-four hours elapsed when the Vatican received a note from the Italian government in which the Duce threatened to denounce the Lateran Treaty if the Papal decision were carried out. To the telegrams sent to Franco and Negrín by the French veterans, the former did not deign to reply, while the latter expressed his gratitude but declined the invitation. The French press published on December 23 the Generalissimo's decision "to accept no compromise, no mediation, no armistice, no truce." The paper *Arriba* declared: "Mediation, never! And if there are Spaniards who wish it, they should all be subjected to the penalties imposed by the most rigid and inflexible justice." Thus disappeared the last hope of ending the war in a spirit of fraternal peace. The Christian idea of a Christmas truce aroused only indignation in the heart of a leader who proclaimed himself the defender of Christian traditions.

What were the reactions in the Republican camp? As in the other, only one voice could make itself heard: the official voice. And that voice was monopolized by Dr. Negrín, president of the Council, who received his principal support from the Communist Party. The President of the Republic, Señor Azaña, was a prisoner in his hands. His desire for peace came up against the determination of his Prime Minister, whose only hope lay in the outbreak of a European war. Azaña had already tried in 1937, through the mission of Professor Besteiro in London, to obtain the mediation of the democracies. He again attempted it at the eleventh hour in Paris, early in February, 1939, when it was already too late, and upon the failure of this attempt he resigned. Only since the fall of the republic has the conciliatory action of one of its leaders, the former Socialist Minister, Señor Prieto, become known.

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In April, 1938, upon retiring from the government, Prieto tried to get in touch with two ministers of Franco somewhere in the south of France. Loyal to the Republic, he wanted to let Prime Minister Negrín know about his project of instituting negotiations for bringing the war to an end, negotiations that involved at this first stage no one but the person who began them. He sought no explicit authorization from the government, but only to keep Negrín informed so that he could not be accused of working behind the back of the man who was directing the war.

"If this is entirely on your own authority . . ." said Negrín, as if he acquiesced.

"Entirely on my own authority, indeed, without any responsibility but my own."

The conclusion of this dialogue is of the greatest interest in revealing the attitude of the two men: "If the day dawns when what I have done becomes known, would you agree to say that at the proper time I informed you about it?"

"No."

"Then there's no use going farther."

"Why couldn't you go ahead with the interview without my being cognizant of it?"

"Because I do not want anyone to be able to have any basis on which to call me a traitor."*

Negrín on the Republican side was the obstacle to any attempt at mediation that would have saved Spain from the complete victory of fascism. In his discourse to the International Brigade on October 29, 1938, he said: "Whoever speaks of compromise or mediation is a traitor to his country and consciously or not an agent of the enemy; an inexorable and sure justice will pursue him." His language was the same as Franco's. Only at the last, in January, 1939, he agreed that Prieto could try to obtain mediation from Spanish America. Prieto himself tells about it: "I had come to America on a mission known only to the head of the government, Señor Negrín, to whom I said that if I agreed to represent Spain at the inauguration of the new President of Chile it would be with the plan of continuing my trip to the other countries, apparently for purposes of simple propaganda, but really in order to procure the joint intervention of all the Spanish American republics for the purpose of bringing an end to the bloody and ruinous Spanish war."

The former Socialist Minister did not limit his efforts to diplomatic channels. He tried during his journey to interest South American public opinion, generously risking his personal popularity before audiences who were looking to him for war propaganda. In Buenos Aires, on January 13, 1939, and at Montevideo on January 29, he publicly proclaimed the necessity for ending the war and the rôle incumbent upon the Spanish-speaking countries of mediating as brothers in the conflict and of jointly seeking from both sides the cessation of the struggle, the elimination of all foreign elements and a mutual agreement to respect the national will freely expressed in a plebiscite that

*Prieto, *"Palabras al Viento,"* Mexico, 1942.

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would be controlled by delegations from those Spanish-American countries. When the Ambassador of the Republic, Señor Ossorio, reproached Prieto, after one of these addresses, for having said things which were highly imprudent, he replied: "Yes, my words do indeed have a serious drawback: that of being late."

Spain lost, as we have seen, one after the other, every opportunity to attain peace. Franco's victory was incapable of providing it because it was the triumph of one faction and not the reconciliation which the whole country needed. Until such a reconciliation is reached through the generosity of both sides, the war cannot be said to have ended. It has kept on for five years now, under a different guise but in a manner no less cruel. In another article we shall examine what possibilities there are of finding a solution for the Spanish drama at the end of this world war, to which it was the sinister prologue; and we shall try to unmask the false solutions that would lead to a new and even more frightful cataclysm.

Teaching the Workers

What labor schools can and cannot do

John C. Cort

JOE PAGANINI drives a truck somewhere in America. He belongs to the union and his is not a typical case—this is not that kind of article—but in his local it so happens that most of the jobs are "under the hat," which means that the men are not receiving the union scale of wages because the union officials are not enforcing the union scale because the bosses are slipping said officials a goodly slice of the difference. In fact, some of the jobs are so bad they are unlaughingly referred to as "under the pump," which means under the hat but more so. There are no financial reports, few or no meetings, and if a meeting or election is held, both are carefully—sometimes crudely—designed to steamroller all opposition. The old story. Variation on a theme of Pegler.

Joe is naturally annoyed about this situation since he is not one of that charmed inner circle who share in the take and are always busy discouraging anyone who might be inclined to criticize. Also Joe is a family man who does not care for birth control and so he cannot be indifferent to the weekly loss of money to which he knows that he is rightly entitled. And yet here there is a sharp conflict in Joe's mind. As a family man he is not entirely a free agent. If he talks out of turn, he may lose his job, he may have his arm or head busted for him, he may even lose his life. Such things are common enough to be known and cherished in the memory of every member of Joe's local. Nevertheless, Joe has a burning Latin hatred for injustice, which, added to a flaming human hatred for injustice to himself in particular, finally persuades him to do something about it. So he decides to become a student at a labor school.

At the labor school Joe learns about the rights and duties of the worker from a young priest who is full of zeal and is beginning to be aware that he is addressing neither the monthly meeting of the Ladies' Sodality nor the weekly meeting of Saint Swithin's Seminary Philosophical Society, also known as the Sons of Saint Thomas. Catching a little of Father's enthusiasm, Joe carries on through a lecture in American Labor History by a local history teacher who is donating his time and is therefore probably a pretty good teacher. Anyway he succeeds in making Joe see that his own little struggle for better working conditions is only part and parcel of a long, long struggle by millions of American workers—a struggle in which there have been dramatic victories and tragic defeats, noble heroes and ignoble villains, sacrifice and heartache and bloodshed, intelligence and much stupidity. It is a story that is at once inspiring and sobering. The last class is Parliamentary Law and Public Speaking, given by an attorney or an experienced unionist, and there Joe learns how to find his way around a union meeting and, even more important, how to throw his weight around (figuratively speaking) when occasion really requires it.

By the time the school term comes to an end no one can blame the faculty and the Bishop, who feels that he is practically dabbling in social revolution, if they entertain the pious hope that Joe Paganini is now ready to go back to his local and be an effective champion for all that is good, true and beautiful. It is just possible that that is exactly what Joe becomes. It is much more likely, however, that Joe becomes nothing of the kind. The truth is, his real difficulties have just **begun.**

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When Joe goes back to his local, it is perfectly true that he has, we hope, greater zeal and knowledge and greater ability to put that zeal and knowledge across. This is a tremendous contribution and all hands should therefore be proud of the work of the Catholic labor schools. Nothing here written is designed to detract one jot or tittle from that well-earned pride. Let us have more labor schools by all means. But let us also consider the limitations of labor schools.

Let us consider, for example, the difficulties facing Joe Paganini. To begin with, he is alone—alone against a cunning, ruthless mob who have been in the business a long time and will not hesitate to use any and every trick, threat and fact of violence to retain their power and their pelf. All right, so it's not as bad as that. Let's say the local president is a Catholic who goes to Mass every Sunday, contributes generously to support of his church and is frequently praised by his pastor as an exemplary citizen. He has never been known to stoop to violence, but those who oppose his thievery have an uncanny way of finding themselves out of both job and union and an even more uncanny way of finding themselves labeled by employers and fellow workers as crooks, drunkards, saboteurs, union-busters and other things too shameful to mention. It is all done in such a discreet, workmanlike way that hardly anyone but the victim knows what is happening.

Being rich and powerful, however, the local boss may try another tactic. Joe Paganini becomes a dangerous critic. Okay, Joe, what can we do for you? Want a better job? Or how'd you like to be sergeant-at-arms at ten bucks extra a week? Just keep your nose clean, Joe—we'll take care of you. By now Joe's class in labor ethics seems far away and long ago. Joe is suddenly dangerous no longer.

This seems possible, but I mention it with fervor because we in the ACTU have seen it happen often enough to make us slightly cynical. On one occasion, for example, we helped organize a rank-and-file meeting in opposition to the crooked leadership of a New York local, only to have the meeting effectively disrupted by two men who had gained "that new-found confidence" at an ACTU labor school. Ask Francis Downing about that meeting. I'm sure he'll never forget it.

Or take another hypothetical graduate of our hypothetical labor school, Josephine McGillicuddy, member of a white collar union controlled by communists. In one way the comrades are doing a good job: they have improved wages and working conditions; they don't seem to be fattening themselves financially from the local's monies; they work hard to build the union and organize the field. Josephine doesn't like their leadership, however, because they talk about democracy and proceed to be just as ruthless as they can afford to be in suppressing all opposition; because they seize every opportunity to turn the union into a CP "transmission belt," an instrument of CP propaganda, a tail for the kite of every CP politician and every CP cause; because they preach class war and the socialist state. Josephine is sensible and realizes that if she were a communist she would probably be doing the same things. She may even like some of them personally. She is still determined to save her union from their domination.

So what is Josephine up against? She is up against adversaries who are even more formidable than those of Joe Paganini. Nothing here as simple as common thievery. These men and women are trained fanatics. They too know all the tricks, in fact, more of them. They will talk your ears off and on again, and all most plausible. They can keep meetings going 'til 1 and 2 A.M., by which time all but the CP faithful are home in bed where they belong. They know enough parliamentary law to be able to abuse it most effectively. In short, they have a machine—a machine even more smoothly oiled, more relentless, more invulnerable than that of the racketeer.

★

It is not just that Joe and Josephine are alone. On all sides they are surrounded by the sea of indifference and inertia, mingled with fear, that paralyze those of their fellow members who are not actually tied up with the union leadership. If in the face of all this their first careless rapture lasts more than three months after the labor school's graduation day, they are made of stern stuff indeed. It is our experience that the odds are about 10 to 1 that in three months Joe and Josephine, if they have not actually deserted to the enemy, have thrown in the sponge, muttered "What's the use?" and dropped once again beneath the surface of the great sea of indifference.

Well, what am I trying to say? I repeat again that the Catholic labor schools, of which there must now be 60 or more in upwards of 15 cities, are doing a grand and invaluable job. It is just that they are so obviously not enough. By themselves alone they cannot possibly meet the challenge or solve the major problems that exist for Catholics (and for Americans) in the labor movement today. What is needed is an organization—a continuing, united, dynamic organization of the Catholic men and women who belong to AFL, CIO and bona fide independent unions. I do not say that what is needed is more and better chapters of the ACTU (Association of Catholic Trade Unionists), although that is exactly what I believe. I do say, however, without fear of

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blowing our own horn, that unless you recognize the necessity for *some sort* of educational, social and religious organization in the Catholic labor field, then you have simply not begun to think realistically on the subject. Pardon me if I seem slightly dogmatic, but the point is that I feel this so strongly that I couldn't possibly express it with anything less than complete finality. And, fortunately enough, it so happens that this is not an original idea on my own insignificant part. In *Quadragesimo Anno* Pius XI points out that wherever it is necessary for Catholics to join neutral unions (as in the U. S.) "side by side with these there must always be associations which aim at giving their members a thorough religious and moral training." Somehow we don't think that the Holy Name or the K. of C. are filling this particular bill. And the labor schools don't pretend to be "associations."

We do not need Scripture to remind us that "a brother that helpeth his brother is like a strong city." It must be clear too that Joe Paganini and Josephine McGillicuddy do not cease to need assistance when they graduate from labor school. With God's help we have created zeal and hope, we must sustain, strengthen and increase them. We have uncovered new talents and new interests, we must continue to feed, form and develop them—a job that usually takes years—until looking at Joe or Josephine we can honestly say, and be sure, "Here are two Catholic trade unionists who know their Faith and know trade unionism, who know all the major implications of that Faith as applied to trade unionism. Here are two Catholics who can be counted on to be faithful, as much as any man can be counted on. Here are two trade unionists who can stand on their own feet and give a good, forceful reason for the Faith that is in them."

Descending quickly from the clouds, let us examine some of the practical problems. Most obvious is that of self-preservation, which often means a need for legal advice and assistance. The chances are that if Joe prosecutes his clean-up campaign with any vigor he is going to need the protection of the law. Resort to the courts is always discouraged and looked upon as a last resort, but often the mere fact that Joe is able—and known to be able—to command legal aid is enough to checkmate funny business on the part of his union boss. In New York the ACTU has a subsidiary of Catholic lawyers organized in the Catholic Labor Defense League, who are always available, free of charge, to distressed rank-and-filers. If it isn't a legal question, the ACTU executive secretary is on hand day and night to lend the benefit of his wide union experience and sagacity. Perhaps a leaflet distribution is called for, to give Joe's fellow members the straight facts on some particular issue. The ACTU can mimeograph such a leaflet and help with its distribution or it can write up the story in its own newspaper and distribute that.

Most of all, however, we are concerned with the problem of getting and keeping more of Joe's fellow members interested and active in the campaign for clean, democratic, Christian trade unionism. Not having Joe's extra fervor, ambition or whatever it is, most of them are not interested in attending a school, listening to lectures on general principles or trade unionism as a whole. But they are interested, more or less, in their own union and their own problems, and ACTU experience has proven conclusively that many unionists who would never go near a school will gladly attend a special conference of members of their own union.

★

And here, just as there are special advantages, there are also special dangers. If left to themselves or even, shall we say, if not guided by a sure, strong hand, the average meeting of union rank-and-filers will lapse inevitably into a session of gripes and beefs in which various men will try to assume leadership by proving themselves the loudest, most eloquent beefers. There will be an attempt to build up the group into a mass movement, then a dance will be held to raise money, a slate of candidates picked, and all energies concentrated on the coming union elections. Chances are that our boys will lose the election, but win or lose, chances also are that few if any will be seen or heard from for a long time.

Usually it has been the policy of the ACTU to steer clear of political elections, and a good idea too in my opinion. But whether or not you agree with this view, you must admit that no change of leadership makes sense until you are sure that the new leadership is able, and willing, to do a better job. Therefore the need is one of education and selection—mostly education, for once the men are educated, they can be trusted to pick their own leaders—and believe me, that is a job big enough to keep any organization busy from now to the end of time. We have seen that the conference technique is the best calculated to bring them in. To keep them in I believe conferences should be small, not more than 10 or 12 members, with a priest chaplain and a trained layman leading the discussion. With one major exception the subject matter will be much the same as that of the elementary labor school: labor ethics, trade union principles and practice, maybe a dash of labor history, parliamentary law and public speaking. Chaplain and lay leader should, of course, meet beforehand and plan the whole discussion. Also a speaking topic may be assigned to one of the members for each meeting and the discussion centered around his speech. The whole emphasis

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is informal and conversational, but at all times the discussion leaders must be sure the talk is a proper blend of general and particular, that the basic ideas get across, that nobody is allowed to corner the floor.

We have mentioned a "major exception" in the subject matter. That exception is Catholic doctrine, religious instruction, spiritual pep talk—call it what you like, make it as subtle as you please, sugar-coat it and disguise it until it's completely unrecognizable—in some shape or form it's got to be there. The lack of it, in fact, has been the principal cause of those failures and disappointments that have attended ACTU and Catholic labor work generally in this country. Our diffidence about this was very natural at first. The whole tendency was to talk tough, to make everything as simple as possible, to lean over backward to keep from scaring workers away with a revival-meeting atmosphere. We had to prove we were "one of the boys."

There is no point in trying to determine how much we were being "all things to all men," how much we were simply afraid to push the full, embarrassing doctrine of Christ "and Him crucified." In any case we paid for our diffidence. We paid in Catholic workers who came to us and whom we could not rouse from their indifference, from their materialism, their self-interest, their consuming ambition. We paid in failure. For the awkward truth is that any Christian agitator is in a peculiarly difficult position. In the measure that he is Christian he cannot appeal to the base emotions: hatred, greed, personal ambition. I know that Catholic college education in this country has been largely pyramided on the lovely vision of "service through leadership," but it does not seem to me that by and large it has actually produced graduates capable of either one or the other. So if our Catholic teacher, whether of workers or bankers, is unwilling or unable to appeal to the difficult motives of self-sacrifice, love, salvation through suffering, leadership through service (no matter how lowly and ill-paid), then he is reduced to those tried-and-true fiascos, the appeals to decency, honesty, enlightened self-interest, democracy, brotherhood and such like. Now as always it is either all, nothing or "because thou art lukewarm and neither cold nor hot," thou shalt be condemned to ineffectual mediocrity.

Maybe these are harsh words, even if they are as much self-criticism as anything else. But I don't mind if they make you mad at me—just as long as they make you mad. For the situation is maddening: with every advantage in our favor we are still lagging far behind the communists in the American labor movement, far behind in the number and zeal and ability of our leaders, even farther behind in the loyalty and intelligence of

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our rank-and-file. It is true that we have lost many of our best men in the services. So has the opposition. But there are still millions of Catholic trade unionists left at home whom we could find and train if we really went after them.

Don't think I am pessimistic. Much has been done, but there is just no point in pretending that we can toast ourselves on a big success in the Catholic labor field. We can't. Nor am I one of those who glows with faith in the plain, ordinary American worker as one who can always be relied on to do the right thing. Nonsense. Left to himself, the average American worker—Catholic or non-Catholic—is going to save neither America nor the world and he will have plenty of trouble just saving himself. But I do think every man who has done anything in labor education will agree that you must have a positively unbounded faith in the potentialities of American workers, their hungry response to ideas, their willingness to learn and work and study, their tremendous capacity for development. I think too that we have underestimated the average man's receptiveness to an appeal to his sense of heroism. Certainly we have underestimated his receptiveness to an appeal to Christian faith.

Communications

BOMBING

Erie, Pa.

TO the Editors: Your editorial on Vera Brittain's pamphlet was a great disappointment for me. I know that evaluation and judgments of people like me (former Europeans) are looked upon with a certain distrust; our "objectivity" is doubted. Therefore, I refrain from any kind of criticism on my own account. I only refer to William Shirer's commentary in the *Herald Tribune* of Sunday, March 12 (Section II). He shows clearly how far Miss Brittain has fallen into the trap set by Dr. Goebbels. May I add that the official German statistics indicate the number of civilians killed by air bombings in 1943 as being 100,000.

Don't believe that by resentment I impute the whole guilt for the world disaster to the Germans. I know that the French, British and American governments failed in preventing total war—and this is their guilt because they could have avoided it. But once total war has been started, one has to accept all its implications. This increase of guilt on the side of the United Nations (guilt not in the political field but in a deeper metaphysical and religious sense) may be considered (in religious terms) as Divine retaliation for their guilty behavior preceding the war. But all those who are not pacifists cannot suddenly at a certain point in the logical course of total warfare interfere by bringing up religious or moral considerations. The total war *has* to be accepted by all who are co-responsible for not having avoided, or even for having brought on, total war. To protest *now* against any implication of total war is a kind of escape from one's own guilt and responsibility. Contrition, repentance and reparation can only (but also should) begin at the moment when a new order shall be set up containing sufficient guarantees against new total wars.

RUDOLF M. MORRIS.

Staten Island, N. Y.

TO the Editors: The weekly articles by C. G. Paulding in THE COMMONWEAL are always interesting. His article "Clerical Monuments" is most memorable and should be mortifying to the Archbishops, Bishops, Abbots and politicians so vocally behind the men behind the guns of destruction in Italy. As collateral reading, the address delivered by Dr. John K. Cartwright, February 17, over Station WWDC, Washington, entitled "Monte Cassino: A Light Extinguished," is as hopeful, honorable and humbling as the protests of the Anglican Bishops. *O tempora! O mores!*

THE REV. JOHN MONAGHAN.

San Francisco, Cal.

TO the Editors: The editorial of C. G. Paulding of February 16 regarding the destruction of the monuments of Italy is the most intelligent article that has appeared on the subject. I have read the rejoinder of C. R. Morey of March 10.

I, being an Italian, may boast of knowing the geography of Italy better than these two lovers of my country. Italy, as everybody knows, is very mountainous, and the railroads run through bridges and tunnels without end. These many bridges, spanning in most instances deep gorges, if once bombed would hold up train movements for months. The railroads run into Benevento from all directions, and in most cases cross bridges of the type mentioned. Had the aviators destroyed these bridges they would have paralyzed traffic far more effectively than by bombing the railroad yards. These yards are located about one mile from the Cathedral of Benevento. The aviators have left in ruins the most beautiful and artistic cathedral of Italy. I suppose that the arch of Trajan nearby did not fare any better.

What was gained by the demolition of Monte Cassino? Were the Germans dislodged? Fallen stones made more formidable forts than the whole monastery.

Of course, "nothing is so important as to win the war and win it quickly"; but common sense tells us that in order to win the wars, and win them quickly, the first thing one must know is the topography of the scene of the fighting.

THE REV. L. SCIOCCHETTI.

"AMEN, AMEN"

Joliet, Ill.

TO the Editors: Anyone interested in the matter could have noted the various cross-sections of opinion in the many papers and magazines relative to the appearance of the recent book "Amen, Amen" by Ensign S. A. Constantino, Jr. The reviews include the sentiments of editors, teachers, ministers, army chaplains, business men, etc. One voice, however, was missing, namely, that of the unrelenting purist professor of sacred theology. But it could not remain silent, and the unmistakable trenchant, offended and disgusted tone was recognizable in the letter in THE

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COMMONWEAL (March 18). It was true to type, save for the use of such very modern words as "'dehydrated" and "vitamin."

When the worthy priest says he feels "awful" that such an "account of the Catholic view of life" should have been foisted on the general public by a "respectable firm," we can readily sympathize with his misery. Said "awful" feeling brings back many a memory of painful expressions on the sober visages of my own professors when a student dared to express a truth off the beaten path of set theological phraseology.

Now it is quite plain that Ensign Constantino did not write "Amen, Amen" for (us) enlightened professors of theology or as a text book for theological students. He wrote it for the men in the service. He did not intend it to be a compendium of the Catholic Faith or an over-all picture of Catholic life. He wished to convey to minds, untutored in matters of religion, in the simplest fashion, elementary notions and principles for right living. He is, indeed, serving up a very thin broth. If what he wrote is "orthodox," as admitted, then the only question we can raise is: does the book serve the purpose for which it is written? We do not use a fountain pen for the purpose of eating soup. If the book serves no other purpose than to bring to a portion of our youth the realization of the necessity of religion, morality and justice for the building of a better world, then surely the book is not a "very bad book." The medium by which this is achieved—the language—is only of secondary consideration. The style of language was designedly adapted to reach the otherwise unreachables. Give the soldiers a diet of Karl Adam or Christopher Dawson and see how many will take and read.

Father Jean C. De Menasce certainly must have overlooked the reviews of "Amen, Amen" appearing in the many Catholic periodicals. If he had not done so he would have discovered that he was standing out as a solitary critic in his utter misery over the publication of this book. All the reviews have been high in their praise of the worthwhile effort on the part of a "good little boy scout."

THE REV. LAWRENCE HENNINGER, O.F.M.

Ironton, O.

TO the Editors: Our Boys' Committee on New Books has voted (13 to 1) to write you to object to what we consider an unfair review* by the Reverend Reviewer of "Amen Amen" written by Ensign Constantino. We think that the reviewer should be able to make at least one favorable comment. Does he not like Catholic pamphlets either? We smiled at some of his own words. They were not so "pretty."

In reading the book reviews in *The Queen's Work, Books on Trial, America* and other periodicals we find unstinted praise for "Amen Amen." These reviews are authentic and acceptable in all Catholic circles.

Too many Catholic books written in beautiful and hard-to-understand English, with no Americanisms and familiar examples, are never read. They become shelf worn, but that is all the wear they receive. High school pupils and men in the service have not the time nor the inclination to read long books even if written in excellent style. Often they do not understand them nor can they interpret them without a teacher.

This is the day of the "vitamin capsule" all right. This is the way we like our reading too, not too heavy nor too much at a time. Maybe the book-worms like it heavy, but we do not know any book-worms. We like our books written in words we can understand. To quote one sentence from one of our Committee, "His (the author of 'Amen Amen') ideas are like explaining Einstein's Theory in words of one syllable."

A book is hardly worth reviewing unless one good thing can be said about it. We have our objections, too, especially does one member of the Committee, but we feel as our teacher of religion, who said "it is a pretty good book, especially the first part, the part about God and our relations with God." We think that the author has proven quite conclusively that we should love, obey and honor God according to the dictates of our conscience.

BOYS COMMITTEE ON NEW BOOKS,
St. Joseph High School.

*This was not a review but a letter to the Editors.

The Stage & Screen

The House in Paris

AFTER some hours of conjecture, contemplation, coffee and rage, I would like to concede at once that I am incapable of criticizing this play. For the trick is—if it *is* a play, I can't tell. It is based on Elizabeth Bowen's novel of the same name, which happens to be a by-heart book with me. I know it from A; I know which side of the page things happen on; I appreciate its punctuation. Under no circumstance could I possibly not remember it as one of the most irrevocable and chiseled pieces of writing designed to be held in the hand and read. Therefore, whatever impressions I received of its staging the other night at the Fulton are bound to seem random and on the bias. But I should like to add that this is by way of explanation and not an apology.

The main trick is, of course, the question of translation from one medium to another. The season's first problem, this question is solved daily by higher-paid men than I—a fact that does not seem to prevent its recurrence—and I wonder if it is not worthwhile to hazard some sort of rule for the adaptation (fitting) of books to the stage. As a case in point, "The House in Paris" makes me feel that any play which can possibly be lifted from, *cut* from, a book may offer some reasonable justification as theater stuff; it is when the reverse process is employed—augmentation of the original material—that fiasco seems inevitable. Miss Bowen's story (more than a story, it is really perfectly a book), building the fact of a small boy from his own imagination, and from the experience and memory of four related adult characters plus one extra accidental little girl, is a balanced one; it is chosen, *written*. Spun of reflection (the communication

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of essences—airs and scenes—through the eyes, the senses of its characters) as well as of talk, it is complete and loved. But while there are no speeches in it; conversely, there are no silences in its play. In order to rear it to the height of a proscenium arch, every piece of its dialogue has been enlarged; matching dialogue has been invented; new characters have been added. And beyond these assumed necessities, unaccountable changes and omissions of language, décor, gesture, have been effected. The purest theatrical "business" in the book—voices speaking in French in the hall of the fatal house, steps on the stairs, the insistent cane tapping overhead—these have been cut. The largest error of all—a switch in period from the twenties and thirties to that of the turn of the century—offends so much both the spirit of syntax of this modern novel, I can ground it only in stupidity rather than in intentional dishonesty. I wish it were sometimes possible to determine motives as well as results in the current *affaires Broadway*. Certainly the result of this particular piece of playwrighting is something at once recognizable and lost. But the motive? . . . who could tell. Surely one does not produce a ruin in the hope of making money. To reduce the evening to acting, there is one phenomenon which is interesting indeed. In the part of Leopold, Alastair Boyd Kyle, while not Leopold (he looks different, his clothes are different, he says different things) gives perhaps the most astonishing performance of the season. Not more, I should think, than ten or eleven years old, this child is a virtuoso and I doubt that there is any technical turn he could not deliver. Vocally entirely proficient, he can also move and halt; and when given a pause, he is able to take it and hold it: his timing is perfect. His only perceptible fault is his legs which he is apt to arrange in the traditional dancing-school pose just before his cue. He is so trained it is fearful to watch; although I do wish Miss Bowen herself could catch a glimpse of his playing. Having steadily maintained that childhood is the great aberration from any possible order, I think she would find this child's abilities new grist for her mill—a sort of double aberration: the aberration from the aberration that is childhood.

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Wearing the smile of a squirrel, Ludmilla Pitoeff marks her début in English in the part of Madame Fisher. As far as I could judge, her stage attack seemed to me to be largely a series of arrested attitudes; and her unfamiliarity with the language naturally reduced the tempo of her scenes. However, I do not feel competent to assess a character in which I cannot believe. For the rest, I thought Pauline Robinson's Henrietta wholly sensitive and almost wholly pure: and I very much liked Cavada Humphrey's Naomi. Somehow or other, the windows of Stewart Chaney's salon set opened on a light which spelled Paris so exactly, so nostalgically for me that I must mention my sad and resentful gratitude.

There is more, naturally much more, to be said concerning this entire terrible meddle; but as far as I am concerned, it can all go down in one word: *No.* (*At the Fulton.*)

KAPPO PHELAN.

Weep for the French

SINCE nobody seems to be certain about what happened in France, we can hardly be surprised that the movies have floundered about in their attempts to portray what went on there during and after 1940. Hollywood has made too few films about France since its defeat for anyone to say there has been a trend toward this subject; and those that we have seen have fallen very definitely into the melodrama class. With two exceptions ("Somewhere in France," a beautifully-photographed English film, and "Cross of Lorraine," which showed the plight of French prisoners in a nazi concentration camp), most of these films have really been star vehicles. Elisabeth Bergner was the troubled Frenchwoman in "Paris Calling"; Michele Morgan worked with the Underground as "Joan of Paris"; and Joan Crawford was converted from a social butterfly to a woman of and for the people in "Reunion in France." Now, this what-are-the-French-doing? theme pops up again and vehemently. Instead of female stars being the center of interest, we find that males are once more saving their country. But the strange thing about the plots in these three new films is that they agree that criminals are the boys who come to the rescue! Perhaps Hollywood's guess is as good as anyone's, but I'm sure it will be disconcerting to the French students of 1960, when they make a study of American cinema, to learn we thought their brightest hopes were in the condemned criminal class.

"Passage to Marseille" shows how a group of prisoners escape from Devil's Island, are rescued by a French freighter, help to quell a mutiny started by the pro-Pétain faction when France's fall is announced. The ship finally makes its perilous way to England where these convicts prove their patriotism toward the country (which once condemned them to that hellish penal colony) by joining the Fighting Free French. Director Michael Curtiz has instilled as much theatrical excitement as possible into a script that alternates between naïveté and hopped-up melodrama. The episodes on Devil's Island are viciously cruel, so barbaric that it is difficult to believe that any men who survived them would be willing to fight for a country that could sanction such sadistic punishment. Philip Dorn, Helmut Dantine, George Tobias, Peter Lorre and

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Humphrey Bogart portray the five escaped convicts with tough realism. Through flashbacks (and flashbacks within flashbacks that require a little concentration) we see the events that led to each man's being there. The first four committed crimes meriting punishment, but the character played by Bogart is (unbelievably) represented as having incurred the French Government's punishment for denouncing appeasement and Daladier! In spite of having been railroaded so unjustly to Devil's Island, and emerging the hardest and most cynical of the five, Bogart later gives his all to *la Belle France*. His cynicism and indifference to life no doubt are meant to account for his ruthless murdering of several helpless Germans who are floating on the ocean after bombing the French freighter. While some Frenchmen and Americans might be guilty of such unethical conduct, it is extremely dangerous for films to laud dubious heroics.* The film expends much effort in trying to be like the popular "Casablanca," which also was on the side of the Free French but which did not substitute a soap box for a story. The casts are somewhat similar. This time Claude Rains portrays a French captain who trusts the five derelicts from the beginning. Sidney Greenstreet continues to get more insinuation into his voice than anyone on the screen, but unfortunately what he has to insinuate in "Passage" as a fascist-minded army man is not entirely clear; he is on the wrong side but the script doesn't search motives. Michele Morgan gives a fine performance as Bogart's wife.

The other two films about the French start out so much alike that at first one thinks he is seeing two versions of the same story. In *"The Impostor,"* Jean Gabin is being led to the guillotine. Comes an air raid. Bombs drop on the prison. In the confusion, Jean escapes, steals the uniform and papers of a dead sergeant. He finds himself in Africa with a group of soldiers who rally to the Free French cause. The group is assigned to build an airport in the jungle. Slowly, Gabin, still posing as the sergeant, drops his selfish cynicism, wins the friendship and respect of the other men and is promoted to lieutenant. After distinguishing himself in battle, he is decorated for bravery—but for bravery performed by the sergeant whose name he took. When the fraud is discovered, the man is court-martialed, dishonored, reduced to private (in a most impressive and moving scene). Later, in a battle for an oasis he dies a hero. This film, which is heavy with hokum and clichés, seldom steps out of theatrical drama to become true life. Jean Gabin's performance shines through honestly at times, particularly in some of the intimate scenes in the jungle camp where he learns to consider his fellow humans. The other actors have little chance to be more than stereotypes. It is strange that this simple tale of one man's conversion should be so morbid and lifeless, for in the lead rôle appears a foremost French cinema actor, and it was produced and directed by Julien Duvivier.

In *"Uncertain Glory,"* Errol Flynn is being led to the guillotine. Comes an air raid. Bombs drop on the prison. In the confusion, Errol escapes, steals some civilian clothes

*I have heard since I wrote this review that this scene will be deleted when the film is shown to our soldiers abroad.

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from an underworld pal. He also walks off with his gal, but doesn't get very far when she gives him the air because the detective, who tracked him down in the first place, catches up with him again. On the way back to Paris, their train is re-routed because saboteurs have blown up a bridge. After a lot of finagling (which involves another girl who falls for the handsome prisoner) Errol sees his duty, goes patriotic in a big way, surrenders himself to the nazis and thus saves the hundred hostages who were taken by the enemy—the enemy being for Errol the nazis and no longer the Sureté. Director Raoul Walsh has been able to get some exciting suspense out of the melodramatic story, mainly through the excellent performance of Paul Lukas as the wise, relentless detective. Usually we are more concerned with his getting his prey than with the hunted man's escape. A newcomer, Jean Sullivan, is effective as the girl who falls in love with Flynn. But the film doesn't make this strange alliance ring true. As a matter of fact, motives are tossed around pretty loosely throughout. We first see Flynn as a hardened criminal. His later sense of humor, change of heart and patriotic bravado are not very convincing. Nor are the actions of the townsfolk (Lucile Watson, etc.) who connive to lay the blame for the sabotage on Flynn and Lukas. Although these mean schemes are properly put in their place by the village priest (Dennis Hoey), the general tone of "Uncertain Glory" (an excellent title, by the way) is not likely to give a favorable impression of the French. After the criminal is executed by the nazis for an act which he did not do, the little country girl who was waiting in vain for his return asks what he was really like at heart. The detective means to impress her and us with his reply: "He was a Frenchman." PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

Books of the Week

Strange Fruit. Lillian Smith. Reynal. $2.75.

LOVE, PASSION, miscegenation, pregnancy, murder and lynching. These are the forces that flow to predestined result in Lillian Smith's prison world. For, given the initial acts of will and human bondage, her men and women are conceived in a world islanded and imprisoned in emotional patterns that have been forming and reforming for three hundred years. Miss Smith sees the consequences of Southern thinking and acting as pathological and evil, where will is lax and even good intention is conscripted by convention, and where ignorance and lust and fear spill over into unregulated orgasms of death.

To write about the South in these terms, to create literary lynching, to plot and seize the wavering and complex urges that make it a pattern of Southern life is not new. What is new is the skill with which Miss Smith writes. What is skilled, too, is the quiet, introspective building of a novel, slowly and expertly into dramatic violence:

> Southern trees bear a strange fruit,
> blood on the leaves, blood at the root,
> black bodies swinging in the Southern breeze,
> strange fruit hanging from the poplar trees.

Given her skill it is strange that her central character—Nonnie—should be shadowy and half unrealized. But actually she moves through the novel like a beautiful image of a beautiful myth. Some of Miss Smith's conversations, too, I do not believe in. There is so much effort to convince you that Nonnie and her sister Bess are educated that they are made too tortuous, too complex, too articulate. I think, also, that Miss Smith drains too much from the stream of consciousness technique when she has adults remember *verbatim* whole conversations of many years standing.

But, these things apart, she has made here in her first novel the same distinguished literary achievement that she has established elsewhere. One task, I think, she has achieved superbly. She has made believable a love that runs beyond mere love-lust and passion between a white man and a Negro. Had she failed in this she would have failed in everything. And she has made us know again that the South is stained with racial evil; that it is foul and sick; and that each of us is touched with its foulness and its sickness. And she makes it plain by her slow and painful analysis that the South is as unknown to most of us as the land of Tibet.

Nonnie Anderson, a beautiful Negro girl, and Tracy Deen, a white boy, are in love. After Nonnie has been made pregnant, Tracy, yielding to the emotional environment of a religious revival, to his mother and his fiancée, to the promptings of respectability, makes arrangements to buy her a Negro husband. Her brother, who is almost literally in love with her, commits murder. A lynching follows, and the primitive urgings of the whites are satiated. That, briefly, is the story.

But Lillian Smith is a psychologist. She is greatly interested in the war over the human battlefield between the forces of anarchy and the forces of order. She conceives man as a soul for whose possession love and hate are contesting. Catholics think of this as the struggle between good and evil, though they would not accept Miss Smith's Freudian compulsions. But whatever the words used to express it the human soul is a ground of contest. And from it emerges a good or an evil man. That the South has yielded the contest to hate; that both black and white live in different tyrannies of fear Miss Smith makes plain once more.

No one that I know of makes more clear the personal and group frustrations of the South. No one is more anguished than she at the obscenity of the race conflict. No one has made it more artistically clear that the South is a system of spoken and unspoken caste, where human life is forfeit to the concept of "a white man's world." Or that it is impossible, in that part of America, to be a Christian, while every day a Negro soul is lynched.

Yet, somehow, in the world of realities and of ideas the novel tends to fall to pieces in her hands. She seems to be saying that men live by symbols, and that if we but change the symbols all is well. In an intense and profoundly moving passage a Negro doctor is trying to prevent the lynchings and all lynchings. Yet he is made to rise no higher than to complain:

"It could be worked out. Slow. Yes, but it could be. Poverty is the slowest. Yes. But there's other things . . . that hurt maybe worse than poverty. It'd be such a little thing," he looked at the white man, "to call us mister. It wouldn't take a penny to do that."

If men were decent and behaved well. Somehow I do not think that the race problem, in the South, is so easy of solution or of easement as all that; or symbolism so powerful as all that. FRANCIS DOWNING.

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The Great Century in Northern Africa and Asia. Kenneth Scott Latourette. Harper. $4.00.

PROFESSOR LATOURETTE of Yale University is a great scholar. He possesses deep and broad knowledge. He has, in high degree, the simple and clear vision of the meaning of actualities, which constitutes true knowledge in distinction to the mere collation and tabulation of "facts." He adds here a sixth volume to the historical monument he is building, a history of the expansion of Christianity. The latter three of these compose "the Great Century" (the nineteenth century): Europe and the United States; the Americas (except the United States), Australasia and Africa (South of the Sahara); and the present volume just off the press. The seventh and final volume, in preparation, will be: "Summary and Conclusion," than which nothing could be more timely and valuable. The expansion of Christianity is also the expansion of world war. Nationalism and national interests have not yet been separable from the evolution of Christianity, nor ever will be. Both are so closely interwoven that the most important feature of this World War has become what is called psychological warfare; more important than the correlation of every physical means of accomplishing the defeat of the enemy armed forces. That is so because war will not cease nor peace be possible, even after the physical defeat of the enemy, until the true psychological antecedents and consequences of the world explosion are made clear and understood and adequate constructive measures envisaged to cope with the impending ruin. Psychological warfare, with which various strategic services are dealing, is a false use of the word. It amounts, as currently used, to no more than disruptive war propaganda. None of these services and agencies makes any attempt to use the word psychology in its true meaning, which has to do with the soul. One of the major factors in this world explosion of which world war is the minor though immediate manifestation, is the confusion of the human soul. In it two facts are frighteningly clear: the psychological, social and economic revolution of Asia and Africa; and the actual rebellion, headed, though not too competently, by Japan, of *all* "subject races" of dark skin coloring against *all* white-skinned "master races." This is what the war is, in the Pacific. And that is exactly what Professor Latourette's present volume describes so ably in its reasons and foundations, and presumably will be equally competently pictured and explained in his final volume. You have, in this great work, a simple and intelligible picture of the great pagan civilizations of Asia and North Africa which inundated the pre-Christian beginnings of Europe; the struggle of new Christian Europe against them; the gradual decadence of Asian and African civilizations and their decline to be "subject races," as Christian Europe gained ascendancy to be "master races" with the material growth of applied science; the Christian flooding back into those same great areas and some new ones, affecting them and being affected by them. Most of us truly fear to read, lest what is said there be "over one's head." This I would urge: That any normal person read the five pages of the introduction to the subject in Chapter 1, and turn to the six pages of Chapter IX, only eleven pages in all, and judge of their clarity and simplicity. He will not fail then to read the sixteen pages of the final summary; and he cannot fail to go back and read in its entirety this presentation of the basis both of world war and reconstruction for peace.

WILLIAM FRANKLIN SANDS.

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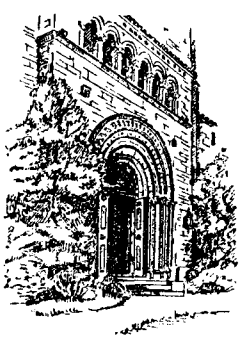

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Rev. John H. Mahoney, D.D., 474 West 142nd St., N. Y. C.

The Future of Colonial Peoples. Lord Hailey. Princeton. $1.00.

THIS BRIEF but closely packed book is worth careful reading, because it comes from the pen of one who probably knows as much about the administration of colonies, both from experience and from observation, as any man now living.

One perceives the difficulty involved when imperial nations have grasped the tail of a bear and cannot let go without disaster to themselves and to the bear, the difficulty (to change the simile) inherent in unscrambling scrambled eggs. Abandonment by the various empires of their colonies to immediate or early self-governing freedom would involve the ruin of countless beneficial enterprises for human welfare and would in most cases turn over half-industrialized native peoples to the mercy of exploiting native groups whose innate greeds are implemented by devices learned from predatory Europeans and Americans. That is only one of the many valid arguments advanced by Lord Hailey against immediate or early grants of independence. But on the other hand to hold the colonies without a sense of real trusteeship for the welfare of those whose country is held is both unspeakably base and also a cause of future imperialistic world wars. The only sane thing to do is to hold on and also to behave, and to educate the dependent peoples gradually toward their acquiring such self-governing ability as is necessary for self-rule in a modern world. Lord Hailey thinks that this is the answer Britain is willing to give, determined to give; and he hopes that others will feel that way too, though he is not altogether sure they will.

The author's analysis of the vast differences there are in colonies and of what causes those differences is exceedingly valuable. So is his estimate of the relative decency and effectiveness of the various powers in respect to colonial administration. Britain, he is sure, is the best, even as in population its colonies (distinct from the self-governing dominions) are the largest, 67,000,000 people. The Belgians (13,000,000) and the Dutch (64,000,000) rank high in wise administration. France he thinks less of, among other reasons because its 56,000,000 colonials are used, as no other empire does use its colonies, for conscripted man power in war. Portugal (9,000,000) is very backward. He says little about Japan's treatment of its pre-war 30,000,000 colonials, apparently thinking that dispassionate estimate of that empire is at present unlikely by Americans. As for the United States (14,000,000 colonials), he says some good things of our Philippine policies and performances, but is eye-raising about Puerto Rico. "Students of colonial conditions might find interesting study in comparing its conditions after some forty years of American rule with those of some of the areas which have been for an equal period in the hands of other controlling powers." A very polite man, this Lord Hailey, soft-spoken. The seven empires named above are the only ones controlling any colonized populations to speak of.

Proposals for possible international control of the colonies Lord Hailey deals with in a brief but competent analysis. There are three: (1) for direct administration of them all by an international body (which is apparently the one least desired by the colonials themselves, who hesitate to flee from the evils they know to an anonymous evil they know not); (2) for some revival of "mandates" held by particular powers under more or less, probably less, international supervision (which has not worked well in

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practice); (3) for some sort of zone controls by which colonies of a given region might be administered jointly by all the major powers already in that area. This last sort of arrangement Lord Hailey thinks the best; but it may be queried whether we of the United States would welcome, for example, or even permit a British co-control of Puerto Rico, or France welcome a Portuguese or Belgian co-control of French Equatorial Africa. The obstacles are tremendous. Moreover, as Lord Hailey wisely says, it is impossible to have international control of colonies, *in any form,* unless the international control extends also over many internal matters in the parent countries; particularly to treatment of depressed minorities, for gross inequalities and inabilities, social wrongs or low standards of living, are not confined to colonies or small countries like Liberia or Thailand or Ethiopia. "It may well be found that the matters which cause unrest or unsettlement of the world arise mainly within the borders of the major powers." Any such international control of problems internal to the great powers is unlikely to be submitted to. Would we permit an international body to step in and tell us how to solve our American Negro problem? Page the Southern Democrats! Yet our Negro problem is more world upsetting than the same problem as it is found in the British colony of Basutoland. Lord Hailey's point seems well taken.

This is a mighty good book to read by anyone, but especially by those naïve people who think that it is going to be easy for the victorious empires to make and keep a just or stable peace, and by those whose suppose that dissolution of empires is a thing to be accomplished by mass meetings at Madison Square Garden or in Trafalgar Square.

BERNARD IDDINGS BELL.

United Nations Agreements. Edited by M. B. Schnapper. American Council on Public Affairs. $3.75.

THIS handy, four-hundred-page volume contains a wealth of textual material on a wide range of topics. It begins with the text of the inter-allied agreement reached at London on June 12, 1941 (the Declaration of Solidarity), follows this with the Atlantic Charter and ends with the terms of the Soviet-Czechoslovak Mutual Aid Treaty of December 12, 1943. It is well indexed—according to countries, the subjects of the various agreements, and the agencies set up to carry them out. About a third of the volume is devoted to the texts of the individual agreements made with other nations by the United States. Many are political but a number deal with food, health, refugees, finance and other matters. One of the fattest sections deals with a long series of Inter-American agreements. An invaluable book for political commentators to have at hand.

CONTRIBUTORS

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This Publishing Business

THE INTELLIGENT HEART

The key to Caryll Houselander's new book, THE REED OF GOD, is in one sentence:

"The sorrows of the whole world, not only the dramatic ones but the daily ones, began to unfold gradually in Our Lady's life, and the intelligent heart can read into them not only the hard outlines of all the world's tragedies but also the smallest details of human existence."

This sentence indeed is the key not only to one book but, in its implications, to the whole Catholic Revival: for the Catholic Revival is not simply a great burst of brilliant writing by brilliant men but primarily a re-awakening of the ordinary Catholic to certain forgotten splendors—and most notably the splendor of man and of human life. There had been an appalling draining away (even from the Catholic mind of the moment) of the mystery and magnificence of man. Men adored the majesty of God and received wonderful proofs of His love, but remained in themselves flat and obvious and commonplace. God was mysterious: men were not; God was awe-inspiring, tremendous, incredible: men were not. But this was monstrous. What kind of Artist would that be who put nothing of Himself into the things He made? If God is all that, then men are all that: not in God's measure but in *some measure.* Man and man's life are not commonplace but mysterious, awe-inspiring, tremendous, incredible; even our degradation is the wreck of vast splendor. In what we are and in what we do immensities are in action.

This is not rhetoric but the plain fact. In the light of it the comparison Caryll Houselander draws between our life and the unwrecked splendor of Our Lady's is not grotesque, it is precise. But it takes "the intelligent heart" to see how precise.

Our Lady, says Caryll Houselander, brought Christ to birth within herself. We must do just that: we are born in Him by His coming to birth in us. Therefore every detail of her life will be matched in ours: we can learn to handle ours by seeing how she handled hers. But where external circumstance is so dissimilar, it takes the "intelligent heart" to see the inner reality of Our Lady's experience and the inner reality of ours and see them similar. "In her brief historical life, the history of the whole world is concentrated, particularly the lives of all the common people of the world, who often do not know that they are Christbearers, living the life of the Mother of God."

In this book everything we know of Our Lady is made to yield its illumination. Perhaps two things stand out most clearly in the memory. The first is Our Lady's virginity. Virginity, says Caryll Houselander, is not the mere absence of a particular experience. It is the willed leaving of some part of life empty *that God may fill it with Himself.* The second is the nine months growing of Christ in Our Lady; there will be a comparable period for the forming of Christ in our lives too: "There must be a period of gestation before *anything* can flower. . . . We must try to be like Our Lady, to make as little fuss as she did about bearing Christ into the world."

The phrase "the intelligent heart" has occurred more than once in this note. It is a pretty good description of Caryll Houselander. Which is why she is to so many a guide into their own mysteriousness. ($2.00) —F. J. S.

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